

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** JULY 15, 2021

**TO:** PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

**FROM:** MARGARET ORLANDO & LAURA DURHAM, DIVISION CHIEFS  
RECREATION SERVICES DIVISION

**SUBJECT:** PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION DIVISION UPDATE

**SUMMER UPDATE:** Summer Camps and Outdoor Pools are in full swing and have been going very well so far. There are 450 children participating in the Modified Summer Camps at the recreation centers. Another 250 children are enrolled in various specialty camps such as skateboarding, basketball, soccer, lacrosse, coding, and theater around the city for the first three weeks of sessions with more camps on the way. With the hot days over the last couple weeks, the pools have been operating at full capacity with people waiting to get in at peak hours.

**2021-2022 OSTP Modified School Year Registration:** Pre-registration was held June 14-19 by submission of an online or paper eligibility form. There were about 120 families that were eligible for fee assistance through the pre-registration process. These families were contacted and entered the program in advance of the open registration process held online on June 30. No location had more than 20 families to pre-register. The centers reduced their pre-Covid maximum enrollment due to limited staffing for the summer and moving into the new school year. The division will continue recruiting staff to increase enrollment at the centers. The hiring process will go into mid to late August.

On June 30, Mt. Vernon and Charles Barrett Recreation Centers filled to their maximum enrollment of 110 within several minutes and waitlists were established once the locations met their maximum. MacArthur is also fully enrolled at 50. The waitlist volume includes 63 at Mt. Vernon, 48 at Barrett, and 10 at MacArthur. As more staff are hired, youth will be moved off the waitlists.

**Program Wrap-Ups**

- The **Charles Houston** Team had a wonderful time with the youth and parents at Banjo park on June 2. Families came out and participated in outdoor activities like tug of war, lawn checkers, connect four and more.
- **Charles Houston Recreation Center** offered a youth boxing class for six participants led by former Alexandria Olympic boxer Tony “the Beast” Suggs. Youth learned boxing movements, jump rope combinations, and mixed aerobics with resistance training.

- Nannie J. Lee** was super excited to invite their community families to "Pop Up on the Miracle Field" Wednesdays to enjoy some much-needed fun and to engage in some enrichment activities. Each Wednesday was a different activity theme such as "Escape Into Nature" where the participants got a chance to meet some of the center's reptile friends. They engaged in "All Things on Wheels" where they rode their bikes, scooter, and skates. They got a chance to experience "Field Day" and "STEMtastic Fun". Participants were able to see their friends and parents had an opportunity to simply hang out or network.



- The **Classes and Camps section** had their end of session dance recitals for the spring at the Fort Ward Amphitheater. Over 43 families were in attendance.



- After having a year off due to the pandemic, 200 participants registered for T-Ball & Coach Pitch Baseball League organized by the **Sports Section**. From March through June, kids were back out on the playing fields. The program was a huge success with parents and players stating how happy they were that the City of Alexandria was able to have a season.

- The City of Alexandria had three teams participate in an **Interleague Softball** season with teams from other areas. The 8U, 10U, and 12U girls fast pitch teams had a total of 44 participants.
- The full day Virtual+ childcare program at **William Ramsay Recreation Center** ended on June 23. Students were treated to a day of fun including cotton candy and popcorn. The other Virtual+ program sites also ended at **Mt. Vernon, Leonard Armstrong, Ferdinand T. Day, and Patrick Henry** with special activities to close out a very unique school year!

### **Program Updates**

- **Chinquapin Recreation Center** is closed until September 6 for facility upgrades.
- All three **Outdoor Pools** are open for a variety of programming this summer. Each pool will have Learn to Swim classes, aerobics, and camps as well as open swim hours.

### **Upcoming Events**

- The Bar C Animal Ranch will present an in-person, socially distanced animal education show on July 12 at **Charles Houston Recreation Center** for children in the summer camp program.
- Summer **Aqua Aerobics Classes** beginning July 6 have 145 participants registered with \$18,390 revenue.
- **Aqua Aerobics Instructor Training** will be held on August 7-8 at Old Town Pool.
- The end of summer **Dog Swim** will be held on September 19.
- Due to the popularity of several sports programs, additional sessions of Basketball Ball Handling, Rookie Weekend Baseball, and Girls Weekend Softball Clinics will be held over the summer.
- The Alexandria Library summer performance series returns to the **William Ramsay Recreation Center**. This year it will be open to summer camp participants and a group of students from ACPS. The students will be treated to magic and wonder from the infamous Peter Wood.
- **Mt. Vernon Recreation Center** will host a Senior Picnic on July 24 from 11am. - 2pm. Seniors will celebrate the summer season with everything picnics are made of, including food, fun, and Friends! Participants will play board games, win prizes, enjoy live entertainment, dance, and best of all... enjoy a classic summer BBQ!
- Rainbow Rock Band Pop Up at **Mt. Vernon Recreation Center** will be held on Saturday, August 14 at 10am. The Rainbow Rock Band is all the rage with participants ages 0-7, and great fun for the entire family.

### **Special Features**

- The **Alexandria Workforce Development Team** will host an early childhood/school age job fair at **Charles Houston Recreation Center** on July 17. RPCA along with other City childcare providers will be on site to talk to potential hires about positions and the application/interview process for their organization. Staffing shortages are impacting all childcare programs. This job fair was created by the Emergency Childcare Collaborative Committee which began in response to the Covid-19 crisis.
- The OSTP training committee successfully hosted a virtual summer training for over 75 staff. The training covered behavior guidance, summer food service program requirements, a first-aid refresher, games training, safe place information, COVID protocol updates, CPS Mandated Reporter training, and staff health/well-being information. Staff enjoyed the format and appreciated the information received before the start of the summer camp programs.
- **Charles Houston, Leonard Armstrong and William Ramsay Recreation Centers** have been very active in collaborations with the Health Department and APD in hosting community days and vaccination clinics through neighborhood outreach events. There have been multiple events throughout the Spring and early Summer. Some events include cookouts, inflatable slides, and agency information tables to encourage community unity, better relationships with law enforcement, and increased participation in Covid vaccinations.



# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: JULY 15, 2021

TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: OSCAR MENDOZA, DIVISION CHIEF - PARK OPERATIONS, RPCA

SUBJECT: PARK OPERATIONS MONTHLY UPDATE

### 1. PARK AND FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

#### a. Park Maintenance

- Maintenance crew moving the kayak shed at Four Mile Park.
- Staff continues to inspect and maintain all park facilities through a combination of routine and preventative maintenance activities such as the 14-day large area mowing cycle, daily restroom maintenance, litter patrol, graffiti removal, trail maintenance, athletic field maintenance and grooming.
- Gmax and HIC testing at the city's playgrounds and athletic fields continued.

#### b. Park Facilities Maintenance

- The maintenance team made several irrigation repairs.
- The maintenance team made repairs to the scoreboard at Simpson and Frank Mann fields.



*Kayak Shed Four Mile Park.*



*Athletic Field Grooming*

### 2. URBAN FORESTRY & HORTICULTURE

#### a. Urban Forestry

- Attended Urban Forestry Today Summer Tree Summit.
- Responded to multiple storm events.
- Fully onboarded new East District Arborist.

#### b. Horticulture

- Nothing to report for the month.

### 3. NATURAL LANDS MANAGEMENT

#### a. Invasive Plant Management and Ecological Restoration



- Staff removed thousands of Higan Cherry, Burning Bush, Oriental Bittersweet, Porcelain-berry, Bush Honeysuckle, and other non-native invasive seedlings and saplings from Dora Kelley Nature Park, Chinquapin Park, Forest Park, Fort Ward Park, and Fort Williams Park. Staff removed many 3-cu. ft. bags of Dock seed heads from the shoreline of the Ben Brenman Park pond and meadow. Staff also foliar-treated all Poison Ivy encroaching on walkways and sidewalks at S. Early Street Park, S. Reynolds Street Park, and the Duke Street-Holmes Run Bridge, as well as English Ivy, Greater Periwinkle, and other weeds at Hillside Park.
- Staff supervised our contractor, Invasive Plant Control (IPC), in the removal of Japanese Knotweed, Golden Groove Bamboo, Arrow Bamboo, Crack Willow, Multiflora Rose, Chinese Elm, Callery Pear, and other invasive plants at Rynex Natural Area, James Mulligan Park, Four Mile Run Park, Holmes Run Scenic Easement, and Dora Kelley Nature Park.

b. Cooperative Initiatives

- Staff submitted a Field Note for publication in the Virginia Herpetological Society's journal, *Catesbeiana*, as to the first ever documentation of the locally rare Eastern Kingsnake that was recently discovered in Alexandria.
- Staff supervised the weeding of hundreds of Helleborine Orchid and other weeds from Monticello Park and installed an interpretive banner at the park's kiosk with the Friends of Monticello Park.
- City Natural Resources Field Inspector began the Annual Tick Drag Project at Fort Ward Park in June. (The Ben Brenman Park Meadow is the second of the study sites.)

c. Environmental Review

- Staff reviewed the proposed Limits of Disturbance areas for the Stage II Concept Plan: 4547, 4555, 4575 Seminary Road Project and provided comments.

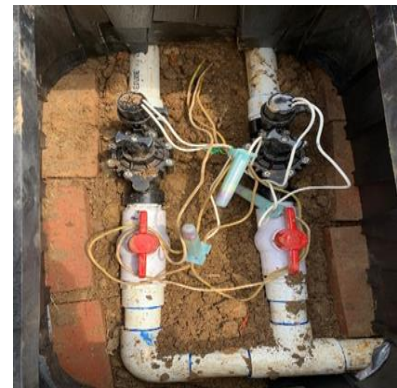
4. JEROME "BUDDIE" FORD NATURE CENTER

a. Programs/Updates

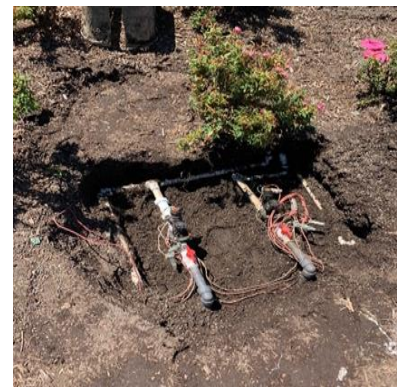
- The Nature Center had 53 visitors in May and provided 8 impromptu programs for 15. Throughout the month we conducted 4 onsite programs for 103 visitors.
- The Nature Center was closed to public visitation for the month of June. We conducted 6 programs for a total of 24 participants.



Athletic Field Safety Impact Testing



Irrigation repairs at Simpson.



Irrigation repairs at Urban Deck.



Scoreboard repair at Simpson.

### School Programs

- May continued our virtual SOL programs for ACPS students. Programs were presented to each class at Mount Vernon Elementary on the topics including life cycles, plant and animal adaptations, and geology. In total, we conducted 66 programs for 1,025 students at Mount Vernon Community School, Polk Elementary, William Ramsay Elementary, and Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy.
- In June we concluded our virtual SOL programs with a total of 7 programs for 144 students at Polk Elementary and Mount Vernon Community School.

### Outreach Programs

- On May 15th we participated in the Pets & People Community Wellness Event hosted by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria. This community event was held at Ruby Tucker Family Center and provided on-site vaccinations for dogs and cats as well as resources and activities for local families in order to creating equitable access for all City residents.

### Onsite Programs

- In June we kicked off summer camps with our Tadpoles Camp for 3-4 year old's. Accompanied by their parents/caregivers, eight campers explored Dora Kelly Nature Park and learned about the animals of the nature center.

#### b. Volunteers Hours

- In May one volunteer worked 13 hours assisting with animal care and health checks.
- In June four volunteers worked 106 hours – most of which were the NVMG group working on identifying plants and removing invasive plants in our pollinator garden.

#### c. Noteworthy

- The Nature Center welcomes three seasonal Environmental Educators to our staff. They will assist with animal care and the facilitation of summer camps and recreation programs.
- The Northern Virginia Master Gardeners continue their work in the Nature Center's native pollinator garden and are coordinating a volunteer workday to assist with weeding and transferring plants in July.



*New Jersey Tea and pollinator*



*Eastern Kingsnake.*



*A grove of Smooth Sumac at the Ben Brenman Park Meadow.*



*Bumblebee and Butterfly-weed.*



*Campers assist in feeding red-bellied cooter.*



*Campers learned what animals eat and completed a craft where they fed a hungry bear.*





# City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** JULY 15, 2021

**TO:** PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

**FROM:** JACK BROWAND, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR *JB*  
RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

BETHANY ZNIDERSIC, DIVISION CHIEF *BZ*  
PARK PLANNING, CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT & WATERFRONT

**ITEM 5:** PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION DIVISION UPDATE  
PARK PLANNING, CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT & WATERFRONT

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### Capital Improvement Project Update

Project Managers: Bethany Znidersic, Acting Division Chief, Capital Development and Jack Browand, Acting Deputy Director

- **Awarded** - Armistead L. Boothe Park Synthetic Field Conversion Project Design Contract
- **Awarded** - James T. Luckett Restroom Construction Contract
- **Awarded** - Nicolas Colasanto Interactive Fountain Design Contract
- **Awarded** - Multi-Court Athletic Light Replacement (William Ramsay & Armistead Boothe)
- **Awarded** - Swimming Pools Maintenance and Repairs ITB
- **Awarded** - Fort Ward Park Picnic Shelter ADA Access Construction ITB
- **Awarded** - Tree Planting Invitation to Bid
- **In Progress** - Landover Park ADA Access Ramp design
- **In Progress** - Fence Installation, Repair and Removal ITB
- **In Progress** - Landscape Architect of Record Request for Qualifications (RFQU)
- **In Progress** - Architectural Engineering for Eugene Simpson Stadium Park – Ball Fields Renovation (RFQU)
- **In Progress** - Holmes Run Trail Flood Damage Repair Design (RFQU)
- **In Progress** - Holmes Run Bridge Repairs at 4600 Duke ITB
- **Submitted** - Fort Ward Park Playground Renovation Construction ITB
- **Submitted** - Chinquapin Park Playground Renovation (RFQU)
- **Submitted** - Powhatan Park Renovation (RFQU)

### Small Area Plan & ACPS Modernization Coordination:

- Landmark Mall
- Eisenhower East
- Potomac Yard North
- Arlandria-Chirilagua
- High School Project Minnie Howard Campus

- Douglas MacArthur Elementary School

### **Armistead L. Boothe Park Synthetic Field Conversion Project**

Project Managers: Bethany Znidersic, Acting Division Chief, Park Planning and Jack Browand, Acting Deputy Director

The RPA Exception Request was unanimously approved by the Environmental Policy Commission on May 17. The RPA Exception Request was unanimously approved at the Planning Commission public hearing on June 24. Final design will continue through the summer. It is anticipated that an award for construction will be finalized later this year with the field opening in the spring of 2022.

### **Armistead L. Boothe Park Court Lighting Replacement Update**

Project Manager: Daniel Unkle, Urban Planner II, Capital Development

The existing pole lights at the tennis court and basketball court were removed and replaced with a modern energy savings LED lighting system. Project is anticipated to be completed in mid-late July.



Before

After

### **Chinquapin Recreation Center and Park Parking Lot Renovation**

Project Manager: Daniel Unkle, Urban Planner II, Capital Development

Parking lot #3 was recently improved in June and July. The existing wood retaining was removed and the new wood wall was constructed along the south parking lot boundary. In late June the parking lot was milled and repaved, followed by new stripping in mid July.

### **Eugene Simpson Stadium Park Renovation**

Project Manager: Bethany Znidersic, Acting Division Chief, Park Planning

Eugene Simpson Stadium Park is one of the six parks in the 2014 Citywide Parks Improvements Plan.

A capital improvement program (CIP) project is scheduled in FY2022 and FY2023 to address the Plan recommendations for both diamond fields, parking, picnic areas, ADA, stormwater and site circulation.

A solicitation for the project design team is currently in progress. The project will include a community engagement process after the design team is selected.

**James Lockett Restroom Installation**

Project Manager: David Ghezzi, Architect, Park Planning & Capital Development

In February of 2021, City issued a Notice to-Proceed for Stevens Construction Corps' commencement of a new restroom facility at James T. Lockett, Jr. Memorial Field. The restroom utilizes state of the art materials and equipment extending life cycle durability, providing ease of maintenance, and providing a safe, sanitary facility for year-round use. The facility boasts of stainless-steel toilet screens, a single-pour epoxy flooring, and energy saving fixtures. Anticipated facility

useful life of the new restroom facility is estimated at a minimum of thirty years and will serve patrons utilizing both the Lockett baseball field and Schuyler Hamilton Jones Skate Park. The restroom is projected to be in operation by the end of July.

**Attachment:**

1. Simpson Stadium Park Plan Amendment memorandum

## City of Alexandria, Virginia

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### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** JULY 15, 2021

**TO:** PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

**FROM:** BETHANY ZNIDERSIC, ACTING DIVISION CHIEF *BZ*  
PARK PLANNING AND CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

**THROUGH:** JACK BROWAND, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR *JB*

**ITEM:** EUGENE SIMPSON STADIUM PARK CITYWIDE PARK PLAN  
AMENDMENT

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**ISSUE:** Park and Recreation Commission consideration of an amendment to the Eugene Simpson Stadium Park Citywide Park Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Park and Recreation Commission (1) provide staff with comments and recommendations for consideration in the amendment proposal for Eugene Simpson Stadium Park and (2) schedule a Public Hearing on the proposed amendment to the Citywide Park Plan.

**BACKGROUND:** In the summer of 2012, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) began a multi-year process with the public to develop a Citywide Parks Improvement Plan. The goal of this initiative was to study and understand the existing conditions and future needs for Alexandria's parks that are over 10-acres, municipally owned, and have multiple uses. The Plan was endorsed by the Park and Recreation Commission on April 10, 2014. The Plan includes 18 recommendations for Eugene Simpson Stadium Park (Simpson). Seven of the recommendations are complete or in progress. The park's remaining outstanding recommendations are funded for design through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and will be implemented using FY2023 CIP funding.

**DISCUSSION:** The Simpson design project is currently under procurement and will create design documents for City approval and construction documents for implementation of the remaining outstanding improvements identified in the 2014 Citywide Parks Improvement Plan. The 2014 Simpson Stadium Park Plan does not include any recommendations for the diamond field surfaces. The rectangular fields are not part of the 2014 Citywide Parks Improvement Plan for Simpson as they were approved under a separate Development Special Use Permit.

During the recent Hensley Park design project, comments from the community were received during the 30 day open public comment period. A repeated comment was a request for additional



fields to be converted from natural turf to synthetic turf. Based on the community feedback received during the Hensley Park design project, staff recommends that additional community engagement be conducted to determine the community's level of interest and support for synthetic turf surfacing on the two diamond fields at Simpson Park.

Staff will conduct stakeholder meetings, including through the Youth Sports Advisory Board and focus groups, to receive feedback on the proposed amendment. The amendment will be posted for public comment on the website and comments will be received through September 15, 2021.

The community and Park and Recreation Commission will consider the following proposed amendment to the 2014 Plan.

- 1) New Recommendation: Provide the option to convert one or both of the existing natural turf diamond fields to synthetic turf.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The Eugene Simpson Stadium Park renovation project is funded through the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The project design contract is anticipated to be awarded in July or August. Construction funding for the project is currently planned for FY2023 in the CIP. Construction is budgeted for \$13.5 million.

**STAFF:**

Bethany Znidersic, Acting Division Chief, RPCA

Mathew Landes, Division Chief, Department of Project Implementation